

## ATTACHMENT 1

### ITEMS WITHIN A *LOOK AHEAD* THAT POTENTIALLY REQUIRE A CHANGE IN BOARD POLICY

(pages 7-8 from the executive summary of *A Look Ahead: Phase I Preliminary Reforms Report*)

#### *Raising the Bar*

Expectations will focus on preparing students so they are “ready by exit.” Whether students enter the workforce or postsecondary education after high school, graduation should prepare them to succeed without need for remediation.

Reference: See pp. 7, 9, 14, 17, 19, 28, 30, and 35 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially p. 17).

Question: Must the Board revise an Ends policy to say that “ready by exit” is the aim of schooling and that the term, “ready”, means without need for remediation?

Answer: No.

Rationale: In the view of administration, there is no need for Board action because “ready by exit” simply provides a way to convert the E-1 Vision Statement into something that is measurable (E-1 states, “All students will graduate having the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to achieve academically, prosper economically, and participate in democracy.”)

Discussion: Policy governance requires the superintendent to define indicators for each policy. Indicators provide a way to gauge whether progress is being made toward accomplishment of the policy in question. Policy governance subsequently calls upon the Board to accept “any reasonable interpretation” that the superintendent offers. The term, “ready by exit,” can be seen as a reasonable interpretation of CCSD Ends policy E-1.

Metrics: Eight objectives that appear on pages 17 and 18 in *A Look Ahead* provide a way to gauge whether students are “ready by exit.” The first objective states, “By 2016, the graduation rate will reach 75 percent.” For a discussion of the precise calculation needed to gauge graduation rate, see the cautionary note that follows below. The second objective states, “Percentage who are ‘ready by exit’ from high school will increase each year.” At this early stage, it is thought that the data for this objective would be a composite of the data related to the other objectives in this section. The third objective states “By 2016, college remediation rates will decline yearly.” Collecting and publishing college remediation rates may require legislative action but would not necessarily require a policy change. A fourth objective states that the “Percentage taking Advanced Placement courses and scoring three or above will increase yearly at each high school.” While collection of data for this objective could require cooperation from the College Board, it is not thought that any change in policy is required. A fifth objective states that the “Percentage admitted to a postsecondary institution and successful in their

first year will increase yearly.” A sixth objective states that the “Percentage exiting Grade 5 who read on-level on state assessment will reach 80 percent.” This objective and the three others that follow are important because the task of preparing students for life after high school graduation is a responsibility shared by elementary, middle and high schools. The term “exit” in this way then means that students who leave elementary school have what is needed to be successful at the next level of schooling. The seventh objective states that the “Percentage exiting Grade 3 who read on-level on state assessment will reach 80 percent.” Likewise the eighth objective states that the “Percentage exiting Grade 1 who read on-level on a district-developed test will reach 80 percent.” The eighth and final objective concerns mathematics. It states that the “Percentage exiting Grade 8 who are proficient in Algebra I will increase yearly.”

One among these eight objectives stands out. It is the fourth objective concerning Advanced Placement. It is plausible that a change in state law may be needed to compel postsecondary institutions in Nevada to provide local districts with the data needed to monitor this. Still it is not expected that this would require any change in Board policy.

Caution: A word of explanation is in order about the measurement of Nevada’s graduation rate.

Some question the best way to characterize the graduation rate for Nevada. While the state reports a rate of 68 percent, the federal government reports another. “As of June 2, 2010, the *National Center for Education Statistics* reports that 51 percent of students who were high school freshmen in 2004-2005 graduated on time.”

The reason for the discrepancy is straightforward.

Although Nevada is poised to do so, it has not yet shifted to using a common graduation rate formula agreed on by all 50 governors. Instead, Nevada still relies on a figure for graduation rate that is based on the “Leaver Rate” provided by the *National Center for Education Statistics*. In large part, the discrepancy between these approaches has created uncertainty about the accuracy of different figures used to portray graduation rate in Nevada.

As we move forward, this uncertainty should go away. That is because there is wide agreement that the federal graduation rate is now the gold standard that will be used by all states.

A 2009 document titled *Implementing Graduation Counts* from the National Governors Association reports the following. “In 2005, the governors of all 50 states . . . agreed to do the following: Take steps to implement a standard, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. States agreed to calculate the high

school graduation rate by dividing the number of on-time graduates in a given year by the number of first-time entering ninth graders four years earlier."

It further states that ". . . the U.S. Department of Education approved new regulations in October 2008 requiring all states to implement a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to fulfill graduation rate requirements under NCLB. The department now requires all states to report the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate at the state, district, and high school levels beginning with report cards providing results of assessments administered during the 2010-2011 school year. Further, to determine Adequate Yearly Progress, states must use the four-year adjusted cohort rate at the state, district, and high school levels, including disaggregated graduation rates for all required student subgroups, following the 2011-2012 school year."

In 2011-2012 Nevada will begin to use the federal 4-year graduation rate for AYP purposes. Until this takes effect, figures that Nevada reports for graduation rate are based on a calculation that differs from the calculation the federal government uses.

#### Empowerment Schools

I support providing schools with relief from unnecessary oversight. To make this a reality, I am convening a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Empowerment to identify how to broaden the empowerment model so more schools benefit. Driving this is the conviction that greater flexibility comes in exchange for greater accountability for improved results.

Reference: See pp. 7, 12, 14, 21, 30, and 32 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 14, 21, 30 and 32).

Question: Must the Board alter policy to reflect changes in how the empowerment model is implemented in the District (for example, to show that less oversight information is needed from schools that meet/exceed performance targets)?

Answer: No. Some districts have elected to include position papers in their policies. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, for instance, has a theory of action for improved student achievement that is based on "managed performance and empowerment." This, however, is not typically the case in districts that rely on policy governance.

Rationale: As long as administration operates within the confines of Executive Limitations policies and can demonstrate that schools are making progress toward timely achievement of agreed-upon performance targets, administration foresees no justification for altering policy concerning Ends or Executive Limitations. If the Board of School Trustees ever agrees it needs more or different information, it can always act corporately to request that. Otherwise the existing calendar for reports on executive limitations is designed to provide the Board with an adequate flow of information.

Discussion: While a change in policy is not contemplated, as Superintendent of CCSD, I plan to present the Board with recommendations that describe how the empowerment model could be broadened so that more schools benefit. In part, these will be informed by and based on recommendations that I receive from the Blue Ribbon Task Force of Empowerment that I have commissioned. This will be provided as information that is incidental and useful to the Board so it can stay apprised of operations taking place within the district. It is for Board awareness only. It is not envisioned that trustees will play any role in daily operations concerning the empowerment model.

Metrics: Not applicable.

#### Performance Zones

In addition to restructuring several departments, I am reorganizing the area service center structure into a dozen or more performance zones that each comprise of feeder-aligned schools. This removes a bureaucratic layer, creates tighter focus, promotes a more nimble and responsive organization, and allows more targeted assistance.

Reference: See pp. 7, 29, 30, 33, and 34 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 29 and 30).

Question: Must the Board alter policy to establish performance zones or to codify an expectation that greater support flows to zones that have greater needs?

Answer: No.

Rationale: Current policy is silent on the area service centers, so no changes are needed or expected related to establishment of performance zones. As for the allocation of resources, ample precedent exists for directing additional resources toward areas of greater need. At the federal level, Title I and services to those with special needs are examples. Within Nevada, district funding is pegged to the composition of the student population. For instance, the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch is an example. Sometimes state funding is pegged to the character of districts. We see this, for instance, in rural versus urban versus suburban. Within CCSD, similar adjustments are made. This happens, for instance, when schools have a disproportionately high percentage of students who claim a language other than English as their native language.

Discussion: While a change in policy is not contemplated, as Superintendent I plan to present the Board with a complete description of the layout for performance zones. This will occur once these details are hammered out by staff.

Metrics: Not applicable

#### Autonomous Zone

Establish a single autonomous zone to provide a refuge for schools that are academically successful. Schools in this zone will enjoy greater latitude with respect to budgeting, staffing, and program design. Oversight will be minimal.

Reference: See pp. 7, 29, and 30 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 29 and 30).

Question: Must policy change to establish an autonomous zone or to codify an expectation about what is needed for schools to move into an autonomous zone?

Answer: No. Urban districts that utilize performance management (Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Denver, Charlotte-Mecklenburg) differ on whether they embed in policy the criteria that are used to place schools in one category or another. Chicago does. Denver does not.

Rationale: Under policy governance, administration is free to operate as long as administration functions within the boundaries set by Executive Limitations and in a way that places the District in a better position to achieve the strategic aims set forth by the Board. Evidence from other large urban districts (Chicago and New York) that have instituted similar structures lends weight to the claim that higher achievement is associated with a performance management structure that includes an autonomous zone.

Discussion: While a change in policy is not contemplated, as Superintendent I plan to present the Board with a complete description of the layout for an autonomous zone. This will occur once these details are available.

Metrics: Improvement will be gauged by the growing number and percentage of schools that qualify for a shift into the autonomous zone because they have met or exceeded performance targets.

#### New Schools Division

Because I am a proponent of decentralizing authority, we are designing a New Schools Division to expand innovative school models. These include empowerment schools, charter schools, and educational management organizations.

Reference: See pp. 7, 31, and 34 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially p. 31).

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to establish a New Schools Division?

Answer: No.

Rationale: At a Board meeting that took place a little over a month ago, the Board discussed my response to questions that two trustees posed about the use of funds from the Lincy Foundation and UCLA Dream Fund. This referred to the establishment of a New Schools Division and whether the Lincy gift was being used to create District policy. At that time I indicated that I had neither the desire nor the intent to use funds from a private gift to create District policy. That remains true. At the same time, I am unaware of any District policy barring the use of donor funds for activity of this nature. We presently have in place a number of schools that could be called “new schools,” including

those funded by School Improvement Grant funds (so-called SIG schools), as well as a number of other startup ventures. One of these involves outsourcing educational management. To date, CCSD has approved a memorandum of understanding for a half-dozen Edison schools.

Discussion: Planning has started on the design of a New Schools Division. The intent is to create a structure of support for expansion of school choice and charter schools, standardize the structure of Empowerment Schools, and help bring best practices to scale. All of these actions are intended to help the District achieve the strategic aims set forth by the Board. While a change in policy is not contemplated, as Superintendent I plan to present the Board with a complete description of the design for a New Schools Division. This will occur once these details are available.

Metrics: Not applicable

#### Turnaround Efforts

Federal funds are already being used to restructure several schools to improve achievement. New efforts have been launched to prepare leaders for this challenge. We will build on and expand efforts in this direction. Other innovations that are envisioned include outsourcing management.

Reference: See pp. 7, 20, 21, 25, and 31 in *A Look Ahead*.

Question: Must the Board codify in policy how a school qualifies for turnaround and the conditions under which the outsourcing of management is permissible?

Answer: No.

Rationale: Because current Board policy is silent on how a school becomes a candidate for turnaround, no change in policy is anticipated. As is the case presently, if any turnaround proposal arises that would involve the outsourcing of educational management, at that time the contract describing that arrangement will come forward for Board consideration and approval.

Discussion: While a change in policy is not contemplated, as Superintendent I plan to present the Board with a complete description of turnaround activity as it unfolds. This will occur once these details are available

Metrics: Not applicable

#### Growth Model

By fall 2011, a system will exist to gauge how each student in Grades 3-8 progresses yearly. Data will be available, transparent, and understandable. It will help us identify pockets of excellence and take them to scale.

Reference: See pp. 7, 8, 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, and 28 in *A Look Ahead* (especially pp. 15, 20, 21, 28).

Question: Must the Board create any new policy or alter any existing policy in order to permit this work to move ahead?

Answer: Not necessarily, but it is possible that at some future date the Board may elect to add growth to its expectations found in E-1 and E-2.

Rationale: Administration is operating on the assumption that, because this coming school year is the launch year for the Nevada Growth Model, the emphasis is on testing the system itself to make sure that the results are credible to the public, meaningful to parents and teachers, and useful to all those who have an interest in teaching and learning. Until it is widely agreed that results are defensible and credible, it is the intent to postpone any use of the data for high-stakes decisions. That includes the use of growth data to evaluate staff or school performance. However, once it is assured that results are valid and reliable for their intended purpose, the growth data can be used to hold ourselves accountable.

4-Tier Teacher Evaluation I endorse a shift from the current binary system (that classifies teachers as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory) to a four-tiered system. The categories include highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective. An important future element of the shift is that the performance of students (i.e., academic growth) is considered during the process of teacher evaluation.

Reference: See pp. 7, 25, and 26 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 25 and 26)

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to conform to changes in state law?

Answer: Quite possibly yes.

Rationale: Depending on the details of newly-enacted laws, CCSD may need to revise policy to remove any conflicts.

Discussion: The Teacher and Leaders Council is charged with defining what it means to base "50 percent of teacher evaluation on student performance."  
Presumably a significant portion of this would be devoted to growth.

Performance Framework The yearly academic growth of students will become the centerpiece of a school performance framework. The chief aim of this framework is to provide the kind of information that enables our staff to learn more easily from each other about what works. Ultimately, it will also provide a way for us to hold ourselves accountable for improved student performance.

Reference: See pp. 8, 20, 21, and 28 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 20 and 21)

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to establish the categories used to classify

schools according to their academic performance?

**Answer:** It is not a requirement to stipulate categories in policy, but the Board could do so.

**Rationale:** A performance framework establishes a unified system of accountability and support. It is used to evaluate school performance in terms of organizational strength as well as student accomplishment and growth. It gauges the impact a school has on the students year to year. As a management tool, it helps identify where and how schools differ in important ways (and how staff can learn from one another about how to improve). The framework will harmonize federal, state, and local accountability requirements (e.g., adequate yearly progress). It will identify pockets of excellence and will be useful in directing resources toward areas of greatest need. It will identify schools worthy of public recognition and could conceivably pave the way (eventually) for rewards that include performance pay for school-level performance. It will provide a predictable mechanism for moving schools from a performance zone into an autonomous zone. Finally, it will provide a repeatable process for classifying chronically low-performing schools as turnaround candidates.

**Discussion:** While the discussion this evening is the first where we have considered how a performance framework will operate in the District, it is not likely to be the last discussion. As a point of reference, it can be useful to consider how categories are used elsewhere to classify schools. In systems that have elected to employ their own system of accreditation, the categories could be:

- Accredited with Distinction
- Accredited
- Accredited with an Improvement Plan
- Accredited with a Priority Improvement Plan
- Accredited but with Turnaround Plan

Organizations that have taken this approach to performance management have found it useful to embrace as a goal statements like, "All schools will be accredited." Clearly stated criteria that delineate each category help ensure that the process is viewed as fair and credible by all.

**Metrics:** When classifying schools, a performance framework typically relies on certain no-fault elements. These include:

- Overall student achievement (percent proficient on state assessment)
- Growth of students (as determined by the Nevada Growth Model)
- Achievement gap (compares trends in growth of various subgroup)
- Adequate yearly progress (AYP)

The challenge is to come up with the proper mix of these elements. Fortunately, several groups are working on this task. Included are administrators (under the direction of Deputy Superintendent Pedro

Martinez) and a cross-section of teachers, administrators, and university professors (working on the Technical Advisory Panel under the guidance of Assistant Superintendent Sue Daellenbach and Special Assistant to the Superintendent Ken Turner). Two other groups are forming to assist. One is a teacher sounding board. The other is a coalition of principals and assistant principals. Both will provide input.

Performance frameworks also tend to include other optional elements:

- School climate (with attention to school safety and incidence of bullying)
- High school proficiency exam pass rates
- ACT or SAT scores
- AP participation rates (and percent scoring 3 or above)
- Attendance rates
- Other (to be defined)

In this discussion, there really are two large questions: (1) How and when are decisions made concerning the mix of categories for the Performance Framework (and relative weights for each)? and (2) How much latitude does each site have with respect to the optional elements? While the answers to these questions will be informed by rich discussions with those in the field, ultimately I intend as Superintendent to bring the performance framework to the Board for consideration. At this early stage, no action or decision by the Board is required. Of course, input and thoughts are welcomed.

#### Incentives

I want us to recognize, support, and learn from teachers who get better-than-expected results with students. To do that, we will invite them to create curricular tools that the District then loads into an existing and growing online library of support material. Because this library is accessible to other educators, it makes it possible for one teacher to learn from another highly-successful colleague. We monetize this by providing a small royalty every time this happens, thereby encouraging the healthy collaboration that can lead to improved results with students. These teacher-produced tools are part of an "open source" arrangement, so they may be easily and freely shared with teachers in other districts and states.

Reference: See pp. 8, 11, 18-20, 32, and 33 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially pp. 20 and 32).

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to clarify whether outside funding will be allowed for monetizing?

Answer: No.

Discussion: Adequate safeguards exist within current policy to ensure that controls are in place.

#### Public/Private Partners

Private funding is being used to support several studies. Two are complete. This includes

one on barriers to achievement. The other is a communications analysis. Both yielded valuable insights. A third that is underway (a comprehensive analysis of District operations and spending) will be ready by September 2011. A number of other public-private partnerships exist that have benefited students and staff in various ways (e.g., by providing access to high-quality professional development for teachers and leaders).

Reference: See pp. 8, 10, 17, 23, 24, 26, 33, 35 in *A Look Ahead* (especially pp. 10, 17, 23, 24, 26, 33).

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to clarify whether partnerships can be developed with agencies like those described (Public Education Foundation, Teach For America, *The New Teacher Project*, etc.)?

Answer: No.

Discussion: Adequate guidelines exist within current policy to ensure proper oversight. Any formal agreements that result in gifts or contracts still come to the attention of the Board.

## Technology

Hybrid education that combines technology-assisted remote learning with more-traditional, face-to-face education has the potential to create more-engaged learning and transform how we think about class size. This is happening in a modest and limited way now. I am working to dramatically expand its use.

Reference: See pp. 8, 9, 12, 13, 21, 25, 27 and 34 in *A Look Ahead* (especially pp. 13, 21, 27, 34).

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to reconfigure the organization so as to place a greater premium on technology?

Answer: No.

Rationale: Policy is silent on organizational design. This is a prerogative of the Superintendent.

## Literacy

Helping children to read is the most important gift we can give them. I support more professional development that equips teachers with better skills in this arena as well better benchmark assessments to reliably gauge proficiency through the years. I am taking steps to see that we acquire tools that are better aligned and which provide more real-time feedback to teachers, parents, and students.

Reference: See pp. 8, 17, and 26 in *A Look Ahead* (see especially p. 26).

Question: Must the Board alter policy in order to support or approve of a shift toward greater emphasis on literacy?

Answer: No.